THE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS*

IN ORDER to understand the part played by diplomatic negotiations in the life of the Republic of Texas one has to bear in mind the tremendous difficulties with which the young nation was beset from its very foundation. The battle of San Jacinto, a crushing and humiliating defeat for the enemy, had brought an end to the hostilities, but had not brought peace. In fact, almost throughout the nine years of its existence the Republic of Texas had no assurance of peace, and it was only on May 19, 1845, when Texas was about to join the American Union, that a Mexican Government signed in Mexico a document specifically stating that "Mexico consents to acknowledge the independence of Texas."

But when, on October 22, 1836, President Houston was installed in office, everything had still to be done in order to create and maintain the first requisite of national existence—an administration. The army, somewhat neglected and restless, had to be taken care of, a navy had to be developed, a judiciary system, a post office department, and in fact every branch of a normal government to be organized—and that "with an empty treasury."

Above all the new Republic needed men and money. It was "land poor"; it had land to offer to new settlers, and also to sell, huge areas which, with the uncertainty of the situation, appealed neither to settlers nor to purchasers. And so the young State was compelled to turn towards foreign countries, seeking recognition first, then financial help and

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if possible men who might cultivate her land, and, if need be, defend it from the unrelenting Mexican enemy.

Since Texas had won recognition from the United States in the last hours of the Jackson administration, some of its leaders felt that the shortest road to safety was through annexation to the United States. This measure having been rejected, the Houston administration, as a last and urgent resort, took steps to obtain recognition from England and France, the two European nations from whom there was the best chance of getting financial assistance and who might possibly exert pressure on Mexico with a view to securing a much needed peace.

Thus it happened that Texan diplomacy played a very important part throughout the life of the new Republic. It was no longer on the battlefields, but in the courts of Europe and through her diplomatic negotiations that the young Republic sought recognition and a measure of relief which, for the time being, she could find nowhere else.

The task of Texan agents and representatives abroad was extremely difficult. Up to the heroic and all-redeeming battle of San Jacinto, little had been known in Europe about the fight of Texas for its independence. The Republic of Mexico still enjoyed the sympathy felt for her own difficult struggle to free herself from Spanish domination. By suppressing slavery and proclaiming this suppression aloud she had created the impression that Mexico was a very liberal state.

"I ask you," declared an eminent American statesman, John Quincy Adams, before the Congress of the United States, on May 25, 1836—that is, a month after the battle of San Jacinto—

> I ask you, what will your cause be in such a war—*aggres-*

> *sion, conquest,* and the re-establishment of slavery where it was before abolished? In this war, the flags of liberty will be those of Mexico, and ours, I blush to say so, the flags of slavery!

And he went on to show that in spite of the affair of San Jacinto, which in his eyes was "a mere surprise," Mexico had a larger number of veteran troops, and was better prepared for war than the United States, so that,

> If she should throw herself upon the southern states in chase of the rebels of Texas, she might pursue them to the very heart of the Union, placing the [U. S.] government in a position, the difficulty of which they might estimate from that they had experienced with only some five or six hundred Seminole Indians in Florida.

Mexico, it is true, had been a restless land. There had been quite a few commotions and revolutions there since 1821. There had been discontent and even rebellion in several of her states. From the European point of view, the Texan war seemed hardly more than just another minor rebellion, one that would be soon put down. Even after the defeat of San Jacinto and the capture of Santa Anna, the Mexicans went on representing the famous battle as a "mere surprise" which had not by any means "ended the hostilities" and from which Mexico would recover when she had organized another army of 20,000 men—or 50,000, if needed—and reconquered what she called "the rebellious State of Texas." The very existence of the new Republic remained therefore uncertain in the eyes of European nations, who were still under the influence of a very active Mexican propaganda. Such doubts as were entertained abroad were removed only when European nations sent their own observers to Texas, and representatives or agents of the Republic of Texas went to Europe.

Coupled with an almost complete European ignorance of

the situation in Texas, there was a moral argument which stood in the way of its recognition as an independent nation. Such a possible step was vigorously denounced, in London for instance, as "a gross injustice" amounting to "the recognition of the *de facto* sovereignty of a few citizens of the United States to the territory of Texas." In Mexico, in London, and in Washington the mere proclamation of the independence of Texas had been repeatedly represented by Mexicans as "the greatest act of robbery of the century."

As may be seen from this brief description of the situation, a very difficult task confronted Texas diplomats and representatives. The first of these, the very able, courageous, and persistent General Pinckney Henderson, immediately discovered that the British Foreign Minister, Palmerston, refused not only to recognize the independence of the new Republic, but even to enter into any form of agreement with a view to establishing trade relations. The best Palmerston would offer was to let Texas carry on its trade with Great Britain under the regulations that Britain had established with Mexico. Undaunted by this severe setback—the second received by the new Republic, whose bid for annexation to the United States had been rejected—General Henderson proceeded to France with two sets of papers ready to be presented, one accrediting him as an agent more or less official, the second—in case of recognition—as a regular Chargé d'Affaires or Minister.

In London he could not obtain from the French authorities a visa as an Agent, much less as a Minister from the Republic of Texas, but after some negotiations he secured another visa, in a private capacity, and he reached Paris on April 23, 1838.

On April 28 he wrote to the French Prime Minister, Count Molé:

> Genl. J. Pinckney Henderson has the honor to inform Count Molé that he is arrived in Paris with credentials from the Government of Texas to solicit the recognition of the Independence of that Republic; and will be glad to be informed at what time he can have the honor of paying his respects to His Excellency. He has also the honor of transmitting to Count Molé a copy of the declaration of the Independence of Texas, together with her Constitution.

He waited for a while and then sent a second note reminding the Minister of his presence in Paris and of his previous request.

He was finally received, a month later, on Thursday, May 26, at nine o'clock in the morning, and upon arriving offered to the Minister the first letter, the mild one, accrediting him as the Agent of Texas. The Minister received him with great courtesy but could not accept the letter, as "such act might be regarded as a partial recognition of [Texas] independence." Thereupon General Henderson asked if he could simply read the letter, to which the Minister agreed, adding that he would be very glad "to hear all I might have to say." But General Henderson did not speak French, and he adds, "the interpreter who accompanied me did not speak well enough to enable me to confer with the Count to my satisfaction." So he asked if he could leave a statement, and he did leave a long document (which is still in Paris—where I have handled it more than once), indeed a splendid statement of the case for the Republic of Texas, a well-organized, well-written, and dignified plea, that of a patriot defending the interests and good name of his country.

> The men of Texas [wrote General Henderson] won in battle because they were superior in skill, in courage, and in humanity . . . and the Republic of Texas . . . can fulfill all the obligations of an independent nation.

After this first conversation, negotiations proceeded, not rapidly but steadily, owing to the sympathies of the French

government (and, strangely, of King Louis Philippe) for the new Republic. Texas had been little known to the French till 1817, when a large group of veterans of the Napoleonic armies founded near the site of the present town of Liberty a colony, famous at one time, and known as the Champ d'Asile. Since then Texas had been, in the eyes of the liberally minded French people, a land of freedom and of opportunity. But the liberals were not in power at that time—far from it—and things moved slowly under the cautious monarchy of Louis Philippe. General Henderson, with infinite patience, waited, negotiated, in a pleasant and on the whole favorable atmosphere—the situation in France—in regard to Mexico—being very different from that in London.

British commercial interests in Mexico "had extended a great deal." "A large part of the Mexican debt was held by British bond holders" who were averse to any step that might impair the relations between the two countries. And finally, because there was a strong movement in England for the suppression of slavery all over the world, sympathies of the British abolitionists went to Mexico.

In France, on the contrary, interest in abolition of slavery was secondary, or even dormant. Franco-Mexican relations had for other reasons reached such a point that, in January, 1838, French troops were landed in Vera Cruz, thereby rendering indirectly a tremendous service to Texas. Their presence compelled General Bravo to withdraw the troops he had readied for an invasion of Texas, and Santa Anna himself had to come and participate in the small Franco-Mexican War in which he lost a leg, without causing tears in Texas.

On September 30, 1838, General Henderson wrote from

Paris that he had had a new and very satisfactory conference with Count Molé, the French Prime Minister, who had "instructed the French Minister at Washington"—M. de Pontois, who happened to be a great friend of Texas—"to send one of his Secretaries to Texas immediately to inquire into and report to this government the situation of the country." "They told me," added General Henderson, "that they could not give me a definite answer until they heard from him." Another friend of Texas in these critical days was Admiral Baudin, who had had charge of the attack on Vera Cruz. Baudin came to Texas as soon as the operations were over. After having received a salute of twenty-two guns from the Texas ships at Galveston he reached, in May, 1838, this very city of Houston, where he received a most enthusiastic welcome, and was granted "the freedom of the city." "Assisted by M. de Saligny, Secretary of the French Legation at Washington," writes an enemy of Texas, "he drew up a very flourishing account of Texas, which was forwarded to France with all haste and which led to the recognition of Texas by France." It was this Count A. D. de Saligny who had been asked to come to Texas and report on the situation. He came to Texas, saw Texas, and was conquered by Texas. He sent not one but several reports.

The main point, the gist of Count de Saligny's enthusiastic reports, the conviction which he repeatedly expressed in unmistakable terms was this: "Texas is forever lost to Mexico. If the Mexicans ever try to reconquer Texas they will be defeated again by the free men of Texas, encouraged and emboldened by their first triumph." Count de Saligny's reports and these reports alone won the recognition of the Republic of Texas by France, the first European nation to grant recognition. In September, 1839, a treaty of amity

and commerce was concluded between the two nations. Count de Saligny was then promptly accredited as French Chargé d'Affaires to the Republic of Texas. He received a wonderful welcome upon his arrival at Austin; delegations went to meet him outside the town and brought him in with a deep feeling of gratitude and pride, for he was the first European who had put the Republic of Texas on the map. At Austin, all those who were of French ancestry, direct or remote—Mirabeau Lamar and others; they were quite numerous—rushed to greet him and to give him their thanks. He plunged into his task with great enthusiasm and with an intense faith in the future of Texas. He was soon one of the most popular figures in Austin. He became a very close friend of General Houston, who seemed to have great confidence in him and spoke to him with extreme and amazing frankness about friends and foes, about the political situation in Texas, and about the relations of the Republic of Texas with the United States.

Throughout his career Count de Saligny was a devoted friend of Texas. He should be remembered as such. His name unfortunately has been too often, and quite unjustly, associated with a trifling and historically insignificant episode, a pig-killing incident, in which one of his servants was involved. Quite a legend has been built around the grossly exaggerated adventure. Various versions have been given, the following account being probably the best, though it is still far from complete accuracy.

> Early in 1841, a pig belonging to an Austin hotel-keeper had strayed in the stables of M. de Saligny, the French chargé, to eat the horses' corn; Saligny's servant slew the pig; the publican horse-whipped the servant; Saligny arrested the publican and had him bound over; the publican, watching his chance, insulted Saligny and ordered him out of his

hotel; and Lamar had allowed this absurdity to cause a complete suspension of relations between Texas and France; again it was Houston who had to invoke peace.

It makes an amusing story and there is some truth in it, a background of truth, as in all legends. The whole adventure, which had the most serious consequences for Franco-Texan relations, came, at first, out of an exaggerated and unreasonable bill presented to de Saligny, who, before he built the residence still standing in Austin and known as the French Legation, had resided at the apparently well-known inn of a certain Richard Bullock, a rather irascible, abusive, and somewhat brutal man. When de Saligny left the inn, Bullock presented a final and exorbitant bill. The French Chargé protested and several of his Texas friends declared the bill "a most scandalous imposition." Finally it was agreed that the matter should be settled by arbitration. The arbiters chosen agreed upon a sum of $313.75, which Count de Saligny was prepared to pay in full, having already remitted $200. But Bullock changed his mind, refused to accept the ruling, claimed the full amount of the first bill, and kept publicly abusing the French Minister, who repeatedly complained orally to the Texan authorities. They promised to do all they could and asked him not to bring official charges, because Texas had no legislation to cover such cases and it would embarrass them. They talked to Bullock, but nothing could stop him from abusing the French Chargé d'Affaires. Finally the Texas Legislature passed a bill just on account of that emergency.[1] Then and only then came the episode of the pig killing, which was but the last drop of water in a glass already filled.

Austin in those days was a little town where pigs roamed freely. Bullock's pigs liked the grounds of the so-called

French Embassy. They charged through the picket fences that surrounded it, rushed to the stables, and ate the grain of de Saligny's eight horses, sometimes stampeding them. Once a servant was severely hurt. The pigs went into the very bedroom of the French Minister, "ate his linen, and destroyed [his] papers." As with Bullock, nothing could stop them. So, after his servant, he tells us, had spent "140 pounds of nails" trying in vain to repair the fences, he finally told him "to follow the example of his neighbors," and to shoot the pigs roaming over his property; this was done. "The order," he pointed out, "did not apply especially to Bullock's pigs, who do not carry inscribed on their backs the name of their master." He did not, therefore, know that the few pigs killed on his grounds belonged to Bullock. Bullock, however, knew better, and forgetting that the personnel of a legation should enjoy diplomatic immunity, he struck the servant of de Saligny. Now the Count protested officially. Bullock was brought before a judge and then released. His bond was paid, to the indignation of Count de Saligny, by the Secretary of Treasury in the Burnet government,[2] Mr. Chambers, and things dragged on. Nothing was done.

Undoubtedly encouraged by the impunity by which he had benefited in the first case, Bullock went further. A few weeks later, he stopped the French Attaché, who was going to see his friend Colonel Flood, the American Minister, who resided at Bullock's inn. Getting hold of de Saligny, Bullock told him that if he set foot on his property he would kill him; apparently he shook him and grossly abused him. Again there was a new and more forceful protest by de Saligny, who complained of the "extraordinary indulgence exhibited to Mr. Bullock" in the first case, and of the "lethargy" shown by the Burnet government in the matter.

When Count de Saligny declared that unless he received the protection to which, as a foreign envoy, he was entitled, he would ask for his passports, he received such a discourteous answer that he replied that until he received orders from his government, he would "suspend all intercourse" with the Burnet administration. A prompt retort notified him that "as a matter of course your immunities and privileges as such cease, and no further protection can be claimed by you than what the law extends to her own citizens." He considered such warning an encouragement to Bullock and decided to leave.

All these incidents would hardly be worth recording were it not that they brought the heretofore excellent Franco-Texan relations to a standstill for almost a year. After an acrimonious exchange of notes, the French Minister, who, it it must be admitted, received no protection, left Texas and went to Louisiana at a time when the Republic of Texas was seeking a much-needed, more or less promised and already almost negotiated loan of 37,000,000 francs, a large sum at the time. The loan was cancelled at the last minute.

The de Saligny incidents are far more important in another respect. They reveal a situation which interfered greatly with the diplomatic relations of Texas with foreign powers and was in the end disastrous for the new Republic. That situation was due to the violent personal antagonisms which had developed among some of the leaders of Texas. De Saligny entertained lavishly and had many friends; one of the most important was General Houston. De Saligny had allowed himself to be dragged, unwittingly perhaps and possibly unwillingly, into one camp—that of the General. The conqueror of San Jacinto and his friends were then carrying on a merciless opposition against a Burnet adminis-

tration, already at bay, which was soon to be replaced, by a three-fourths vote, by a second Houston administration. De Saligny was obviously considered a political enemy and treated as such by the Burnet administration. He could obtain no redress and it was reported to him that when he was personally mistreated by Bullock, Mr. Chambers, a member of the government, has said, "It is too bad that he did not kill him."

Things went quite far, indeed unusually far; several reports then written by Count de Saligny to his government were intercepted and never reached Paris, where today they are indicated in numbers only and marked "missing" in the Archives of the French Foreign Office. All this political hostility, abuse, and mistreatment must have seemed to the French envoy a bitter reward for his exertions in favor of Texas. Only three months before, a select committee had been appointed by the House "to invite the Hon. M. de Saligny, the French Minister, to attend the sessions of the House, at any and all times that might suit his convenience." Accordingly on November 17, 1840, he had gone to the House where "all members rose and saluted him." He was then introduced by the Speaker as an "ardent and devoted friend of Texas," as "the Representative of France, a country who had helped the United States in their struggle towards freedom." "We also have *seen* and *felt* her friendship toward us," added the Speaker, "when we were as yet unnoticed and unknown." "Republics," he went on, "*are* not ungrateful and Texas will long remember with kindness your devotion to her cause!—In the name of the people of Texas we greet you!"

In his reply Count de Saligny tendered his "most grateful acknowledgement to the House of Representatives for the

feelings expressed through its able and distinguished speaker." He assured the House that "they were fully reciprocated on the part of France," that the French people were "anxious and ready to render to their nation all the services they could."

Referring to the cordiality with which he was being received, he went on, "You do me justice in looking upon me as one of the most sincere and devoted friends of Texas. If my humble exertions have in any way contributed to promote the interests of this Republic, I am now amply repaid for it."

Count de Saligny had not, and could not, have forgotten those recent and better days, nor had his many friends in Texas. There were vigorous protests against the whole attitude of the Burnet administration in the matter. Meetings were organized in Houston and in Galveston, where General Houston violently denounced the "scoundrels" who were disgracing Texas.

In order to quiet the indignation and to erase or lighten the onus which the departure of Count de Saligny was casting upon the Government at a most critical moment for it, and undoubtedly also to counterbalance the charges presented in his intercepted reports, the Burnet administration drew up a report of its own suggesting that the French Government should recall the French representative, who was then on his way to Louisiana.

Among the charges brought against Count de Saligny, the most damaging one, had it been founded, was that several months before, he had "paid a poor man who had transported his furniture in counterfeit money." It would be difficult to reconcile the enthusiasm with which Count de Saligny came to Texas with the charge that one of his first

gestures would be to pay "a poor man . . . with counterfeit money." The other charges were that he had not appreciated what had been done for him, that he had "been arrogant to the last degree," that he had sent a protest disrespectful to the government to which he was accredited, that he had "attempted to create parties hostile to the administration of the government," that he had procured "the getting up of meetings—in which the most inflammatory speeches were delivered and uttered against the administration."

The last two imputations indicate the difficult situation in which the Burnet administration was placed and its reasons for wanting Count de Saligny recalled to France. Obviously they did not want him to remain in Louisiana waiting for better days. He, on the other hand, knew that soon there would be a change and that he would return to Texas, where he had built a home, where he was no transient diplomat, but rather a "settler" among diplomats. Suggesting the recall of a diplomat who had left and repeating the plea, as the unfortunate Chargé d'Affaires for Texas in Paris had to do, was going beyond the diplomatic prerogatives of any country. The French government took no notice of the repeated request until, one day, upon the insistence of the Burnet government, they replied—rejecting all the charges as "vague" and "without any foundation."

Apart from the irritation which political passion could produce, the Burnet administration completely misunderstood the attitude of Count de Saligny. From Louisiana he went on collecting all the information he could about Texas and forwarding it to his Government in reports which show no trace of bitterness or injustice, but still reflect his persistent fondness for Texas. The attentive reader of his numerous reports will see that de Saligny was a very intelligent

observer and a true friend of Texas. He was perfectly loyal to General Houston, but one finds him deploring (on January 3, 1841, for instance, at a time when he already was having difficulties with Bullock) the fact that "political passions were going too far." Thinking only as he did of the wider interests of Texas, he pointed out that the opposition (and the opposition was that of General Houston) "was following a disastrous course," that it was about "to reorganize [that is to say, he explained, "to disorganize"] the navy and other public services, and that its main concern was to undo what the Lamar-Burnet administration had attempted. "One can deeply regret," he added, "the part taken by General Houston in such a systematic campaign of opposition, and the unfortunate use he has made in this respect of his talents and influence." In another report of January 19, he points out with obvious regret that "the army will be made smaller yet," and adds, "The men of the majority think far more of gratifying their hatred of Mr Burnet than of upholding the interests of Texas."

In these remarks we have the view of a dispassionate foreign observer, who, as is often the case, understood the situation better than political leaders too absorbed in their feuds or misled by their personal ambitions or prejudices.

If these reports had been known in Texas, they would have furnished campaign material for Burnet's administration, but they would have earned for de Saligny the hostility of General Houston and his friends. There was no duplicity, however, on the part of de Saligny. He was an observer for his Government, he was supposed to provide reliable information, and he did.

The difficulties which Count de Saligny met and his departure from Texas had for a while a disastrous influence

not only on Franco-Texan relations, but, in a general way, on the diplomatic relations of Texas with other foreign powers. Paris was then the center of Texas diplomatic activities in Europe. As long as Texas had only one representative for Great Britain and France, that representative lived most of the time in Paris, and it was from Paris that Texas representatives tried to extend their relations to other European countries—to Belgium and Spain, for instance.

Such a situation was all the more regrettable because diplomatic negotiations had progressed very slowly in Great Britain under Palmerston who, brilliant though he was as a statesman, never understood the position of Texas. He saw the situation merely in the light of material and commercial interests, ignoring the deep-rooted feelings of the men who had fought for Texas independence and who were far from thinking of associating their present or future interests with Mexico. On the contrary, he thought that "such a State, being weaker than the North American Union, would be more likely to connect itself to Mexico for defense than to enter into a League with the United States for aggression." He felt that in matters of trade also the interests of Texas would in many respects harmonize with those of Mexico.

And later when Lord Aberdeen replaced Palmerston, he also at first entertained the same views; moreover, he allowed himself to be plagued and almost paralyzed by the abolitionists, who were waging a vigorous campaign in England for the abolition of slavery in Texas.

To such misunderstanding of the situation must be added other factors which account for the attitude of the British governments, these factors being the persistent resistance of the Mexican bond holders, considerable trade interests, and the exceptionally favorable diplomatic position of Great

Britain in Mexico. Rather than judge the British too severely on that occasion, I would recall a remark once heard from a very distinguished British representative in this very city of Houston, whose words one should bear in mind when dealing with British diplomacy: "We have to live. We are not a large country, our resources are limited, we have to trade—and trade wherever we can."

The unusually cautious attitude of the British towards Texas and the strong sympathies of General Houston for the French people brought the new Houston administration to take steps toward bringing Count de Saligny back to Texas. A very courteous and friendly letter from the new Secretary of State, Anson Jones, was brought to him at New Orleans, expressing

> . . . the desire of His Excellency, the President [General Houston], that the unfortunate difficulties existing between Texas and France, should be immediately arranged to the satisfaction of both parties. The regard and sympathy which he, in common with the people of this country, entertains for France, he has instructed me to assure you, is sincere and ardent as well as his desire to reestablish and perpetuate those friendly relations, which formerly existed, and which are so essential to the promotion of the best interest of the two countries.
>
> For the more speedy attainment of this important object, His Excellency has instructed me to say that he would be most happy to see you again at your post, near this Government.

Count de Saligny returned, and was most cordially received by Anson Jones, by General Houston, and by the members of the new administration—which decided that the innkeeper who had mistreated him would be prosecuted. Bullock, the innkeeper in question, no longer lived in Austin, where he had been severely blamed for the difficulties in which he had involved Texas and for the failure of the

much-needed French loan. Steps were immediately taken to bring him back to Austin, but he died before he could be tried, and that put an end to the whole controversy.

Count de Saligny once more settled down among his friends and again was a popular figure at Austin. His diplomatic prestige does not seem to have been impaired, judging from the visit he soon received from the new American Minister, Judge Eves, a Kentuckian, "not a bad soul," he declares, who told him, "I do not know why they gave me the job; I never had anything to do with diplomacy, but my wife was sick, wanted to come to Texas, spend a few months with some friends. Some friend in Washington had me appointed." And then, having no doubt heard about Count de Saligny's difficulties, and of the entirely satisfactory manner in which they were settled, Judge Eves, counting on his colleague's experience and diplomatic skill, added, "If there was any complication I would like you to help me out."

Shortly afterwards, however, Count de Saligny, whose health had been severely tried by the strange ordeal, asked for a leave of absence and was temporarily replaced by Count de Cramayel, who went on sending confidential reports to the French Government. But these, most interestingly and conscientiously written as they are, do not reflect the keen sense of observation of the preceding ones, and above all they lack the unfailing sympathy which, even under the most adverse circumstances, Count de Saligny preserved for Texas and the people of Texas. Texans in their turn did not forget him, and with the assistance of some long-memoried and occasionally over-imaginative publicists, the Bullock or "pig-killing" incidents won for Count de Saligny a semi-desirable immortality, which was denied to all other foreign representatives, whether British or Ameri-

can, under the Republic of Texas. And as if fate itself would lend a hand in correcting the injustices or mistakes of men, the residence which he built a hundred and sixteen years ago has survived. It stands there on its hill, quite impressive in its simple and yet artistic lines, having weathered for over a century the severe heat of endless Texas summers, the spring rains, and the storms of autumn.

"Republics are not ungrateful," declared Representative Kaufman, Speaker of the Texas House, in November, 1841. Today, thanks to the patriotic and gracious gesture of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the French Legation, once a famous center of good cheer and hospitality, is being restored, and will survive for many years to come as a true monument of the short-lived Republic of Texas.

The return of the Houston faction to power might in itself have reestablished, to a certain extent, the ebbing prestige of the new Republic. Unfortunately, General Houston, for political reasons, gave in his public Message an extremely sombre picture of the "deplorable" situation created by the preceding administration. Such words as

> There is not a dollar in the treasury. . . . The nation is involved from 10 to 15 millions. . . . The precise amount of its liabilities has not been ascertained. . . . We are not only without money, but without credit, and for want of punctuality without character

were for home consumption undoubtedly. They none the less went beyond the frontiers of Texas, and in their turn contributed to what the conqueror of San Jacinto blamed his predecessors for doing—"impairing our character abroad and confidence at home."

And, as if to crown General Houston's dismal revelations, soon disastrous news filtered abroad: the deplorable and humiliating end of the Santa Fe expedition, and the reoc-

cupation of San Antonio by Mexican troops—an even more serious humiliation in the eyes of foreign observers.

Under the circumstances the task of the representatives of Texas in Europe became a most difficult one. They went on, none the less, calling the attention of the various governments at home to the disastrous effect which the echoes of political quarrels, and occasionally of articles published in the Texas press, had on the good name and the interests of their country in Europe. Soon they came to realize that efforts to secure loans from European nations would be entirely vain. They therefore discouraged all efforts in that direction, considering them "humiliating" for the new Republic. When, on July 31, 1843, Lord Aberdeen suggested that perhaps the British Government "would consent hereafter to make such compensation to Texas as would enable the slaveholders to abolish slavery," Ashbel Smith, the Texan Chargé d'Affaires, remarked to his Lordship: "Any compensation received by Texas from a foreign power for the abolition of slavery would be derogatory to our national honor." Struggling against wind and tide, Ashbel Smith went on, until a year later, in a conversation of June 24, 1844, Lord Aberdeen "more than once made observations to the effect that he regretted the agitation for the abolition of slavery in Texas, as it had created so much feeling and dissatisfaction on our side of the Atlantic, and that hereafter he would have nothing to say or do in relation to this subject."

Upholding the dignity of their country, maintaining the confidence of European nations in its permanence, rejecting all foreign interference in problems which in their eyes concerned only their country, the representatives of Texas had come to the point that they even stood against a guarantee of Texas independence by European powers. At the same

time they kept calling the attention of foreign governments to the intolerable situation created by the threats, incursions and raids of an unrelenting enemy. There again they were slowly winning their case. The problem of Texas independence was finally taken seriously; both the British and the French governments were prepared to "take promptly and efficiently all proper steps to bring about a peace with Mexico." But another obstacle arose: the rumors of annexation of Texas by the United States, and the apparently changing, in fact at times contradictory, attitudes of some well-known Texan leaders in the matter. It is difficult today, unless one follows their negotiations almost step by step, to realize what the representatives of Texas had to face during the last crucial years of the existence of the Republic.

One can understand how a Texan Minister in Paris felt when he had to transmit a report suggesting the recall of his French colleague in Texas (in fact already out of Texas) and when, pressed by his Government, he had to insist on an answer which out of courtesy the French Government was reluctant to give. Having received it, he acknowledged it in these words, "The undersigned but fulfilled a duty imposed upon him by his Government."

On the other hand the warnings about the disastrous effect of political conflicts when carried too far were seldom heeded at home. In vain did Texas representatives in Europe point out that under no circumstances should the young Republic give the impression abroad that it was an unruly State, one divided against itself and unable on such a vital problem as annexation to show unity of purpose. Firmly, steadily, however, they went on directing their efforts towards maintaining confidence in their country, securing its independence in every way and extending its relations with other nations.

Texas diplomats at home and abroad had little or no experience at first and they undoubtedly made mistakes. The relations of the Burnet administration were strained not only with the French but also with Colonel Flood, the American Envoy, who strongly protested on several occasions against the discourteous way in which he was being treated. When, on the other hand, General Pinckney Henderson, who had just come to Paris, was asked by the French Premier if any commercial arrangements had been made with Great Britain, he (from a patriotic motive, undoubtedly) replied in the affirmative, when in reality none had been made. On another occasion, when the King of France asked him what was the population of Texas, he hesitated, as if he did not know, looking at de Saligny, who, a true friend and more experienced as a diplomat, promptly replied "one million, Your Majesty" while the true figure was nearer 80,000 and he knew it.

General Houston himself, in spite of his desire to reestablish the most amicable relations with the French Government, took a measure which for a while strained these relations. He revoked what he called "the unauthorized and illegal act of General Lamar," who had abolished the duties on French wines. It was not that financially such a favor represented a great loss to the Texas treasury, but that it had been granted by his political adversary, General Lamar. And when the Texas Chargé d'Affaires in Paris had to discuss the measure with the French Government, instead of presenting it as a political step which should cast no doubt on the sincerity of General Houston's friendly dispositions towards the French people, he tried to prove that the new policy would on the whole prove more advantageous to French interests than the preceding one.

In March, 1845, when the various steps leading to annexa-

tion were already partly known in Europe, G. W. Terrell, the last Texas representative in Paris, complained to his government that he was "completely in the dark as to the condition of things at home." Unmindful of the fact that the French authorities were also "in the dark" concerning the annexation situation and particularly the views of General Houston, he was highly indignant because he had been kept a whole month in Paris without being able to obtain an appointment allowing him to present his credentials and to discuss an enlargement of Franco-Texan trade relations. What he considered "palpable neglect" and an unpardonable diplomatic discourtesy was merely due to the fully justified hesitations of the French and, in fact, of the British, as both governments had at last fully reconciled their views in the matter and were acting jointly.

Both nations knew that the independence of the Republic of Texas would be recognized only reluctantly and under pressure from Mexico and that such pressure would later be strongly resented if this recognition proved, in the end, but a first step towards the annexation of Texas by the United States.

Nevertheless, on March 15, 1845, Mr G. W. Terrell drafted an extremely strong and most undiplomatic protest, which, at the suggestion of Lord Cowley, the British Minister in Paris, he decided at the last minute not to send to the French Government. Two days later the appointment he had expected was granted and, in the most courteous and friendly manner, the Texas representative expressed "the sense of obligation felt by the Government and the people of Texas for the generous efforts made by the French Government to adjust the difficulties existing between Texas and her mother republic."

In the reply Louis Philippe, the last of the French kings,

expressing an opinion which was more or less that of the French nation, pointed out that he had always been "a warm friend of the United States," adding "and so am I of Texas."

> France [he went on], is proud of having been the first nation to recognize the independence of the United States, and also that she was the first of the Nations of Europe that recognized the independence of Texas. You will please make known to your Government that France has ever felt, and continues to feel, a deep interest in the prosperity of your young and promising Republic. You have shown yourselves worthy of independence.

Such words reflect the impression that the Texas representatives, with the help of the French and, later, the British envoys in Texas, had been able to create abroad concerning the young Republic of Texas. A strong sense of dignity, a patriotism unimpaired by national conflicts and enhanced by distance, guided them throughout their difficult ordeal. The same patriotism—and the same strong attachment to the Republic, it must be added—were found among those who to the last carried on from home her diplomatic negotiations.

Upon his second return to Texas, in March, 1845, Count de Saligny received a message from Anson Jones, the last President of the Republic of Texas. The French Envoy immediately went as requested to see Jones at his residence a few miles from Washington on the Brazos.

He found him "ill, in bed" with a face "careworn and greatly changed" and with a heart torn by his deep devotion to the Republic of Texas, his serious concern for her future, and the conviction that he would eventually have to bow to the public will in the matter of annexation. But even then Anson Jones was not ready to surrender to any other com-

pulsion. He reminded Count de Saligny that once, as he had told him, he was in favor of annexation as the quickest and safest means of putting an end to the difficulties of Texas, but he added that so many attempts had failed that he had thought it over and changed his mind, even if the United States were willing to admit Texas on more favorable terms than he had expected. He said,

> Annexation will be used by parties in the United States, only to their own interests and by ambitious leaders. What was that bill of Miller Brown? Nothing but a request to Texas to invite it to commit suicide and promising that when the sacrifice had been accomplished they would send the coroner to pick up the body and then would decide what to do.
>
> Calhoun [he added], who had lost his assurance, invited people to resignation and patience: We have carried these two virtues to extremes, we no longer want to be humbugged.

Jones then revealed to Count de Saligny that he was ready to follow the advice of several friends, to take the initiative in hostilities, to carry the war to the right bank of the Rio Grande, to call the populations of the Mississippi Valley, inviting them to come and share with Texas the spoils of Mexico. They would gather from thirty to forty thousand fearless adventurers whose command would be given, not to General Duff Green, but to General Sam Houston, and at the end of six months the Mexican government would be only too glad to sign peace under the walls of Mexico.

Three days after the conversation, which took place on March 15, 1845, the news came that the Congress of the United States was in favor of the annexation of Texas. One more effort was made through the good offices of France and of England; and, with the consent and the help of the President of the Texas Republic, a document was drafted,

taken to Mexico, and there signed by the Mexican government, which at last consented "to acknowledge the Independence of the Republic of Texas."

The long and difficult battle for the recognition of the independence of Texas by Mexico had been won. It was a free and independent Republic, which, soon after, rejected the proposed arrangements and decided to join the United States of America.

The men who had served the Republic of Texas in the field of diplomacy and, as most of them had done, on the battlefield, had deserved well from their country.

In this my last public lecture, this swan song of mine, in this great and liberal institution, I felt that having followed closely these men here and in Europe in their magnificent and difficult struggle, I would like to bring them closer to you and to revive for you, if but for a few moments, some pages of a great and noble past, a past which we French people share with you, and the memory of which, in common with you, we must try to protect from the tides of time and the oblivion of men.

MARCEL MORAUD

NOTES

1. An Act supplementary to an act for the punishment of crimes and misdemeanors—passed on January 22, 1841.
2. By "the Burnet administration" is meant that period in which Vice-President Burnet took full charge. President Lamar, very ill, was in Louisiana.